United Nations A/58/383

General Assembly

Distr.: General
22 September 2003
English
Original: French

Fifty-eighth session
Agenda item 12
Report of the Economic and Social Council

Letter dated 12 September 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you, herewith, the text of the Marrakech Declaration adopted by the Fourth Global Forum on Reinventing Government, held in Marrakech on 11 and 12 December 2002, devoted to the theme, "Citizens, Businesses and Governments: Dialogue and Partnerships for Democracy and Development" (see annex).

The Forum was organized by the Kingdom of Morocco with the support of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat. More than 1,000 participants from 120 countries attended the sessions of this Forum, including three Vice-Presidents, three Prime Ministers and 46 Ministers, in addition to several dozen high-level international leaders, business executives, heads of non-governmental organizations and academics.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly under agenda item 12.

(*Signed*) Mohamed **Bennouna**
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Annex

Fourth Global Forum on Reinventing Government

Citizens, Businesses and Governments: Dialogue and Partnerships for Democracy and Development

(Marrakech, 11-13 December 2002)

Marrakech Declaration

We, the participants in the Fourth Global Forum on Reinventing Government, held in Marrakech, Morocco, from 11 to 13 December 2002, devoted to the theme "Citizens, Businesses and Governments: Dialogue and Partnerships for Democracy and Development", have adopted the following Declaration:

I. Preamble

The Fourth Global Forum on Reinventing Government, organized by the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco in partnership with the United Nations, has brought together representatives of governments, international organizations, businesses and non-governmental organizations to discuss questions relating to good governance, sustainable development and the modernization of public administration. This is the fourth such Global Forum; the three previous ones were organized, respectively, in Washington, D.C. in 1999 by the Government of the United States of America, in Brasília in 2000 by the Government of Brazil and in Naples in 2001 by the Government of Italy. A number of pre-Forum workshops were organized by the United Nations and financed by the Government of Italy.

Referring to the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development of September 2002, which identifies dialogue and partnership as an appropriate platform for democracy and development, the participants in the Fourth Global Forum discussed the potential for making a culture of dialogue and partnership among citizens, the private sector and governments a vehicle for strengthening democracy and development.

The sessions of the Global Forum addressed the following four major themes:

- Strengthening public policies to foster partnerships between the government, civil society and businesses;
- Redefining the role of the State and its regulatory framework;
- Promoting local and regional partnerships for economic development; and
- Culture, values and development in the context of globalization.

Participants express their deep gratitude to His Majesty Mohammed VI, King of Morocco, for bestowing on the Forum the great privilege of his Royal Message and his High Patronage. Participants request the Chairman of the Organizing Committee to convey to him a message of thanks and gratitude on their behalf. They warmly thank the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco for its superb

organization of this important event, and the United Nations and other international partners for their support.

II. Underlying questions

II.1. The effective, efficient, legitimate and democratic exercise of power and authority with a view to attaining socio-economic goals should continue to be the ultimate objective of the concepts of governance and good government and their philosophical underpinning. During the past two decades, governance has become a concern for the developed, as much as the developing, countries, particularly since, at the dawn of this new century, they all face similar problems — corruption, constitutional crisis, economic stagnation, ethnic conflicts and rising crime — albeit on different scales. Civil war, terrorism, extremism, famine and epidemics may also be included in this list.

II.2. In the contemporary world order, governance-related problems transcend national borders. Major concerns such as reform of the international financial markets and the terms of trade, control of the impact of pollution on the environment, the risks of global warming and epidemics, emigration and refugee flows, the fight against extreme poverty, access to health care and services, and to water and food, and rampant urbanization are clearly governance issues that call for international cooperation. In resolving these problems, shared sovereignty could prove useful in tackling questions usually dealt with by nations individually.

II.3. Information and communication technologies (ICT) have increased citizens' access to information, while computer networks have opened new avenues of communication for political leaders and organized citizens' groups. Thus, the spread of television has transformed the conduct and holding of elections and the way in which governments and politicians monitor their images. This means that, in a number of situations, ICT have helped to disseminate sound democratic practices across the planet. For example, certain norms are gaining increasing acceptance and international support in such areas as human rights, environmental rights and democratic approaches. It is vital, however, to reduce the risk that basic freedoms and human rights could be violated by the misuse of ICT.

II.4. Moving towards democratic governance and good governance means focusing special attention on three interdependent processes: (i) establishing equality in social relations; (ii) developing productive activities and expanding markets; and (iii) moving towards a society with institutions it recognizes and accepts as being its own. Social democratization processes should be aimed at reducing extreme inequalities (which create exclusions incompatible with democracy), promoting respect for human rights, providing basic social services and developing civil society.

II.5. Experience in a number of regions throughout the world has shown that democracy, on the one hand, and economic growth and modernization, on the other, are not incompatible. Moreover, the new context for economic growth demands greater flexibility and adaptation and a rapid response by businesses, governments and civil society. Only an open, transparent, decentralized and participatory political system can provide an environment conducive to developing effective partnerships among actors in the productive process, civil society, and governments with a view to meeting the demands of economic modernization and international competition.

Only a system of this nature can facilitate fruitful dialogue among citizens, businesses and governments in order to resolve a wide range of social issues and ensure the participation of all citizens in instituting good governance.

II.6. As we move towards initiating the dialogues and the partnerships that lead to an organized society, an effective productive system and a representative and decentralized state capable of dealing with the interests and demands of different social groups, a major obstacle will have to be overcome: national identity versus the need to set common long-term goals. National identity is a permanent construction; it is a dynamic process by which each generation strives to strike a harmonious balance between the values of the past and those which must be formed to meet the challenges of the new globalized world. New paths for reconciling the values of local identity and universally shared values must therefore be found. The latter are values which create loyalty to communities and, at the same time, exhort citizens to share a vision of the future based on, inter alia, solidarity, mutual trust and respect, moral conduct, environmental awareness, the responsible exercise of authority and the equal treatment of others. This lies at the heart of close interaction between culture and development in the context of humanized globalization.

III. General recommendations on best practices

III.1. Involving citizens in redefining the role of the State

Free, responsible, creative citizens are the fundamental basis for the establishment of any democracy. At the same time, redefining the role of the State means bringing it close to the citizens and placing them at the heart of political processes.

Good governance cannot be based only on the good will of leaders or the wise theories of experts; it is a process through which citizens assume leadership in order to guide and master their own destiny. The development or strengthening of citizens' autonomy requires high-quality, long-term education for all; rigorous defence of human rights and fundamental freedoms throughout the world; the expansion of competition and participatory democracy; a reduction in bureaucracy and authoritarianism; and the encouragement of creative initiatives by citizens.

III.2. Encouraging local communities to take their own well-being in hand

Historically, centralized nation States have led to progress. Now that life in society has become more complex, the societal problems inherent in daily life have become more diversified, while citizens are increasingly likely to demand higher-quality education and are thus becoming aware of what is at stake in modern democratic life and eager to take their own affairs in hand. Central Governments can no longer meet all expectations. Redefining the role of the State now means rebuilding the State through a "bottom-up" approach. Since the best solutions to the world's real problems are found on the ground, local communities must retain or reassume the necessary power, staff and resources to address the collective problems of concern to them.

III.3. Encouraging businesses to manage sustainable growth and wealth

Economic growth is a strong engine for human well-being. Businesses have become active in society at the local, national and global levels, and must develop a partnership and/or sponsorship relationship with trade unions, the media, sports clubs, universities, the arts, philanthropic organizations and other non-governmental organizations. The promotion of businesses has become an important means of opening societies and improving their system of governance. Governments, civil society and businesses should work to achieve greater confidence and improved dialogue and cooperation among themselves. This requires policies to combat unfair competition such as monopolistic or bureaucratic privileges, complicated administrative procedures and unnecessary bureaucracy. In particular, small businesses, as the greatest source of jobs, deserve special assistance through financing, technical assistance and tax breaks, and large businesses should be more closely involved in the development of small businesses. On the other hand, special efforts should be made to ensure that all businesses, especially multinational and transnational corporations, comply with environmental regulations, respect labour law and employ fair trade practices. Above all, businesses are urged to play their proper role in eliminating inequality, complying with legislation that prohibits child labour and making every effort to ensure sustainable human development.

III.4. Mobilizing civil society to face societal and cultural challenges

The emergence of non-governmental organizations of civil society as a driving force towards a better future for humankind is an important modern event. These organizations have proved their effectiveness in areas such as human rights, environmental protection, improvement in the status of women, local development, health care, education and literacy training, and humanitarian and social work to combat poverty and marginalization. Governments and international agencies are urged to rely more heavily on non-governmental organizations in launching properly implemented projects which address social problems. The organizations, for their part, must improve their networks for interaction between communities and nations throughout the world.

III.5. Ensuring that Governments are fully responsible and accountable

People need better, smaller Governments which cultivate their real strengths based on adaptability and flexibility, and eliminate useless bulk. If citizens, local communities, businesses and civil society genuinely play their proper roles, they can relieve States of unnecessary burdens, allowing them to focus on their essential mission of developing appropriate strategies, ensuring the equity and quality of standards and rules, enacting fair, effective regulations, facilitating the resolution of conflicts, providing for the independent evaluation of public policies, and managing the risks and uncertainties inherent in their mandate in a responsible manner. This mandate is fulfilled within a framework of close cooperation with social partners and non-governmental organizations, and through democratic participation in the decision-making process. Public policies should be implemented in cooperation with the citizens, peoples and partners concerned, and there should be public follow-up to and assessment of activities in terms of their costs and benefits, successes and failures, and direct or indirect impact.

III.6. Creating and developing new types of partnerships

Today, there are many opportunities for fruitful partnerships in new areas, with new instruments and for new players. The underlying principle of these various activities, which include the arts, waste-water management and the launching of small-scale projects in remote rural villages and large-scale projects at the global level, is that of synergy.

There are many examples of imaginative partnerships which have succeeded in solving common problems and in creating a favourable environment for everyday work. No effort should be spared to disseminate this experience, share its results and capitalize on the lessons learned to build new and more suitable forms of partnership. Non-governmental organizations, businesses, local communities and State agencies are urged to adopt proactive partnership approaches.

III.7. Using information and communications technologies (ICT) to reinvent government

Initial experiments have shown that ICT provide instruments which can be used by partnerships to reinvent government and sustain economic and social growth. These technologies make it possible to inform citizens and Governments instantly, facilitate administrative procedures, give users an opportunity to monitor the handling of their files and to interact with the system, and ensure rapid, equitable access to information at the submission, examination and selection stages of tendering.

The privacy of citizens must be protected and channels of communication between citizens and their Governments must be maintained. Even more important, ICT can reduce bureaucracy, combat corruption and provide a neutral interface between officials and users. Thus, the progressive implementation of e-government is a challenge which must be met by democratic States. Even in the developed countries, the information revolution has the potential to speed up the democratic process.

III.8. Improving global solidarity to make the world a better place

Reinventing government is made an even more urgent challenge by the need to improve the living conditions of billions of people who face poverty, disease, illiteracy, limited access to water, and ethnic, religious or national conflicts. Today there is a problem of uneven access by the developed and the developing countries to the benefits of globalization. The vision of "one world" and of interdependence between people is incompatible with that divide. Moreover, poverty is a fertile ground for dictatorships and extremism. Thus, for both ethical and political reasons, leadership is a responsibility as well as a privilege. The major Powers, under United Nations auspices, should follow the same standards on issues such as peacekeeping, conflict resolution and environmental protection.

The situation in Africa deserves special attention in that regard. Africa is capable of breaking the vicious circle of poverty, conflicts and suffering and of overcoming the pitfalls of development. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is indeed a major step towards this goal. Its success will depend on strong international solidarity; solutions to be considered include

unhindered access to the international market, mobility of capital and technologies and proper public debt management.

III.9. Building universality on the basis of intercultural respect and dialogue

The legacy of human civilization keeps pace with the development of that civilization. Shared universal values, norms and knowledge provide a strong common cultural dimension. However, globalization must not eliminate local cultures and those cultures, in turn, must not turn their back on universalism.

This powerful trend can be pursued through the promotion of fundamental values which allow people from different backgrounds to live together in peace and to interact fruitfully on the basis of the principles of tolerance and mutual respect. Each culture, each civilization has the legitimate right to criticize others, but it must also cast a critical eye on itself. Never before has humankind shared such a common destiny; globalization appears to be an irreversible process, but it must be controlled. All participants in this complex process, including international organizations, Governments, non-governmental organizations, businesses, academics and artists, are increasingly aware of what is at stake, of the opportunities and of the risks.

III.10. Increasing the support provided by international development partners

In order to support the Governments of developing countries, the international community, including bilateral and multilateral agencies, must support mechanisms for the exchange of experience and new ideas in the area of governance and public administration through agencies such as the United Nations Online Network in Public Administration and Finance and through the Conference of New or Restored Democracies to be held in Mongolia in June 2003; in that connection, the participants welcomed the recent General Assembly resolution inviting the United Nations Secretariat to continue to provide substantial support for future Global Forums.

In that spirit, the United Nations, the World Bank, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, donor countries and other international bodies are requested to further strengthen their efforts to promote good governance and the use of ICT for democracy and development.

NEPAD, a new element of the international governance system, is also requested to pay continuing attention to reforms of the democratization process in Africa and, to that end, to build partnerships with both the developed and the developing countries.

Lastly, we call on non-governmental organizations, private enterprise and Governments in both the developed and the developing countries to work synergistically to narrow the gap between citizens and their Governments, develop mutual confidence and implement a common vision of sustainable social and economic development.

III.11. Follow-up by the Government of Morocco

Reiterating their deep and sincere thanks to the Government of Morocco, the participants suggested that, as presiding country for the Group of 77 in 2003, Morocco should take appropriate action to promote the implementation of previous

recommendations by world leaders, international organizations, non-governmental organizations and civil society.

III.12. Fifth Global Forum

The participants welcomed the Mexican Government's generous invitation to host the Fifth Global Forum in Mexico City in November 2003.